CHAPTER ONE:
A FUTURE WITHOUT MERCY

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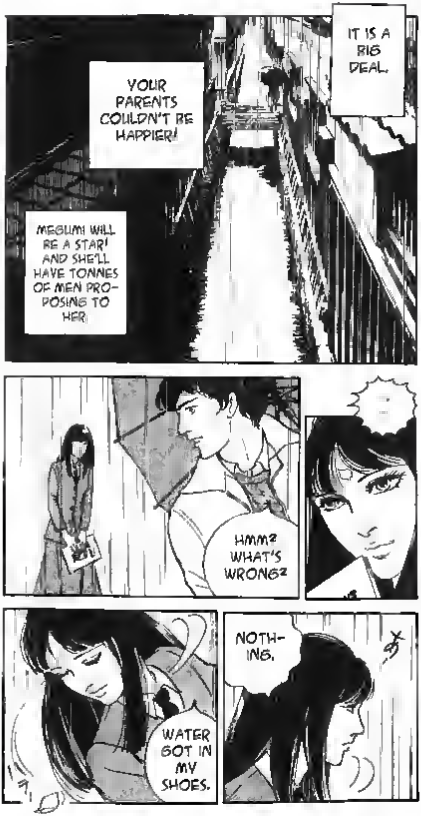
TSUMIKO!

TODAY'S THE DAY SHE DIED.
AND IT'S ALSO MY 18TH BIRTHDAY
KISHI-KUN.
YOU MUST LOVE YOUR MOTHER VERY MUCH.
TO VISIT HER IN THE RAIN
ONE WOULD WONDER
ABOUT THE IRONIC COINDENCE OF THESE TWO EVENTS IN ONE DAY.
DON'T WORRY I'LL REMEMBER NEXT YEAR!
REALLY HISHI-KUN?! I'M SO HAPPY!
THIS GRAVE, AND MY BIRTHDAY.
ARE ONLY FOR ME TO REMEMBER NO ONE ELSE PAYS ATTENTION
I.. I SEE.

AH?!
NO ONE HAS BEEN SO NICE TO ME, FOR ALL THESE YEARS..
FLOWER PETAL.. OF A SAKURA BLOSSOM..
...
AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE IN CLASS?
OH, THIS IS MY 3RD YEAR IN UNIVERSITY, I HAVE A LOT LESS CLASSES NOW.

IF ONLY YOU KNEW THE SAD STATE I'M IN WITH MY FAMILY...
I'M SERI-OUS.
DON'T SAY THAT.
I WANT TO GO TO TOKYO TOO. NO ONE CARES FOR ME AT HOME ANYWAY.
?
OH YEAH.
HOT NEWS
MEGUMI!
YOUR LITTLE SISTER MEGUMI FORGOT HER NOTEBOOK AT MY PLACE THE OTHER DAY.
I WAS WON-DERING HOW SHE GOT SO GOOD AT ENGLISH
SO... YOU WROTE THE SPEECH FOR HER
SHE'S MAKING AN ENGLISH SPEECH IN PLACE OF OUR CITY!
I SEE ...
YOUR SISTER'S AMAZING SHE'S REPRE-SENTING THE COMMUNITY AT THE CEREMONY!


IT IS A BIG DEAL.
YOUR PARENTS COULDN'T BE HAPPIER!
MEGUMI WILL BE A STAR! AND SHE'LL HAVE TONNES OF MEN PROPOSING TO HER.
HMM? WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING.
WATER GOT IN MY SHOES.

Mr Kurnitz, you are very
wel come to our
our city hall

We are very happy
to have a chance
to listen to your
MEGUMI, LOUDER. DON'T BE AFRAID.
YOU'LL BE GIVING FRESH ROSES TOMORROW REPRESENTING OUR CITY.
FORGOT AGAIN! IT'S ALL MOMMY'S FAULT FOR DISTRACTING ME.
MEGUMI'S NEW SHOES
SHOES

!
THOSE SHOES
SHE IS OUR DAUGHTER THINK ABOUT THE APPEARANCES OF OUR FAMILY HER SHOES ARE REALLY BEAT UP
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SIZE HER FEET ARE
I DON'T KNOW
BUNKOU, MAYBE YOU SHOULD GET NEW SHOES FOR TSUMIKO TOO.

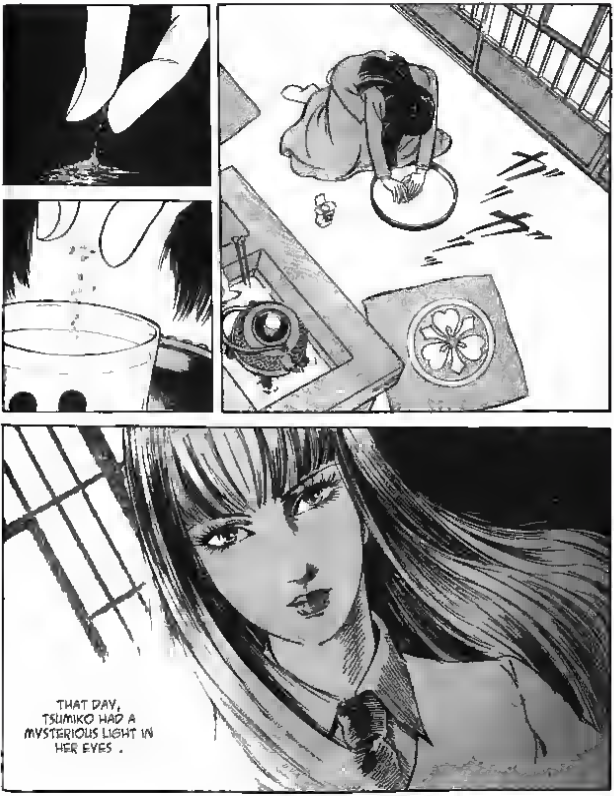
!?
SHE'S YOUR BASTARD DAUGHTER, AFTER ALL.
THEN YOU BUY HER SHOES YOURSELF.
EVERYONE'S SAYING HOW SHE'S LOOKING MORE LIKE HER MOTHER EVERYDAY.
HER MOTHER GOT OBSESSED WITH YOU, AND KILLED HERSELF!
We are very happy to have a chance to listen
to your concert.

AH!
Thank you very much!
TSUMIKO! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW EXPENSIVE THOSE ROWLS ARE?!
YOU JUST WANT TO SEE US GO BANKRUPT, DO YOU?!

YOU'RE FINE THE WAY YOU ARE NOW.
ARE YOU DONE? I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR A LONG TIME.
BUT...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO APPEAR IN FRONT OF AN ENTIRE CITY TODAY.
SWEETIE, I MADE HONEY MILK FOR YOU, IT'S GOOD FOR THE THROAT.
RIGHT AWAY SWEETIE
WARM THIS UP FOR MEGUMI!
GET LOST!
I CAN'T GET MY HAIR DONE PROPERLY!
MOM! HURRY UP AND COME HELP ME!
THE NEXT MORNING-

KEEP THIS WARM!
HERE, GIVE THE COMB

GERIN
YOU SHOULD SHOW YOUR PRETTY FOREHEAD.
BANGS GETS IN THE WAY.
*CRUNCH CRUNCH

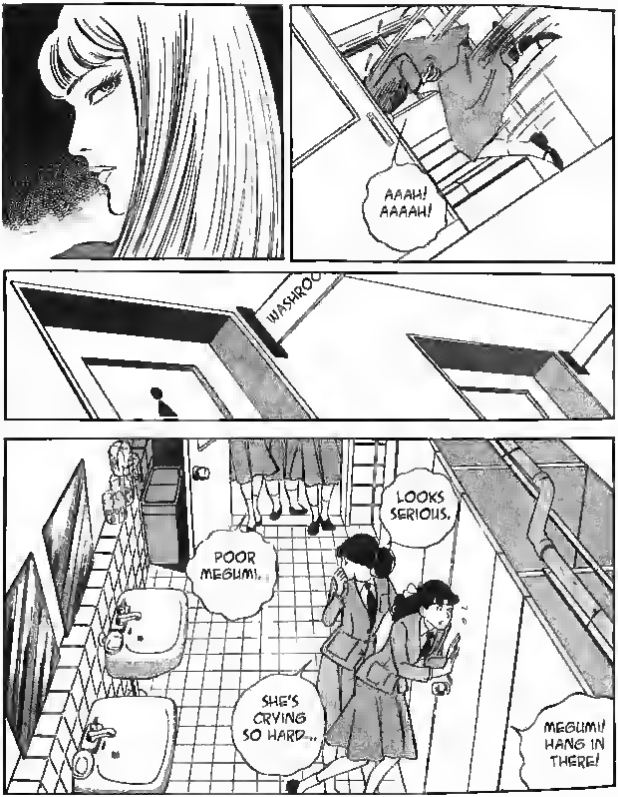

THAT DAY, TSUMIKO HAD A MYSTERIOUS LIGHT IN HER EYES.

YES!
YES.
NEDU!

THE PRINCIPAL IS HERE PERSONALLY TO CONGRATULATE YOU.
AH, MEGUMI
THE WORLD FAMOUS MUSICIAN, CHARLES LAIRS, IS COMING TO OUR TOWN TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR CONCERT.
IT'S A BIG DEAL
REPRESENTING THE ENTIRE TOWN, TO THANK MR CHARLES
YES, PRINCIPAL!
IT'S AN HONOR FOR OUR SCHOOL.
YOU CAN TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY OFF SCHOOL.

NO!
OH YEAH, ARE YOU TWO TWINS?
OH I SEE. WHAT TALENTED GIRLS.
THEY'RE A YEAR APART.
...
...
I HATE BEING IN THE SAME CLASS AS HER! CALLING HER MY SISTER!
I HATE THIS! I HATE THIS!
BECAUSE OF HER HISTORY!
IT'S SO SHAME-FUL FOR ME!

ON CONTRAST, MEGUMI BECAME AN OUTGOING CHILD
SPOILED AND LOVED FOR BY HER FAMILY LIKE A SHINING JEWEL.
ENOUGH! DON'T SAY ANYMORE!
DON'T EVER COMPARE ME WITH HER!
AHH... AHHH!
NEDU! WHAT'S WRONG?!
HE DIDN'T KNOW THAT TSUMIKO WAS BORN FROM A CORPSE.
THE PRINCIPAL WAS FROM OUT OF TOWN.
TSUMIKO IS VERY BEAUTIFUL BUT SHE ALWAYS HAD A CREEPY LOOK ABOUT HER
AND BECAUSE OF THIS PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO GO NEAR HER, LET ALONE FINDING A DATE...


AAAH! AAAAH!
WASHROO
LOOKS SERIOUS.
POOR MEGUMI.
SHE'S CRYING SO HARD...
MEGUMI! HANG IN THERE!

COME, SENSEI! HURRY!
IS STUDENT NEDU OKAY?
DIAR-RHEA?
SHE HAS DIARRHEA
DID SHE EAT ANY-THING BAD THIS MORNING?
NO, WE HAD THE SAME BREAKFAST, AND I FEEL FINE.

HOW WILL SHE BE ABLE TO GIVE THE SPEECH ON THE STAGE...
THIS IS BAD
WASHROOM
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT TO SAY ON THE STAGE
MY ENGLISH IS HORRIBLE.
I CAN'T, SEISEI
WE HAVE TO FIND A REPLACE-MENT RIGHT AWAY
SENSEI.
I CAN DO IT.

EVERY-DAY AS SHE PRAC-TICED
THAT'S GREAT!
YES, BE-CAUSE I LISTENED TO HER SPEECH.
YOU CAN!
YES!
TIME'S RUNNING OUT. PLEASE PREPARE.
I'D LOVE TO.
DO YOU MIND GOING ON STAGE INSTEAD?
.....
.....

OUU...
NURSE'S OFFICE
OH PLEASE, PLEASE, HELP ME...
PLEASE STOP THE STOM-ACHE PAIN...
BUT THE MEDICINE WILL TAKE A FEW HOURS TO BE IN EFFECT
YES I KNOW, I WANT TO STOP IT TOO...
S-SENSEI

MEGUMI, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I'LL DO THE SPEECH FOR YOU.
SISTER!
MISS, PLEASE HURRY!
MY MOM AND DAD ARE WAITING TO SEE ME ON STAGE.
カチャ!!
MEGUMI

LEMME WEAR YOUR SHOES.

IF I WEAR THOSE OLD AND UGLY SHOES ON STAGE,
HOW EMBA-RASSING WOULD IT BE FOR MOM AND DAD?
...
...
NO! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!
MEGUMI!
I WON'T LET YOU REPLACE ME!
I'LL GO ON THE STAGE EVEN IF I HAVE TO CRAWL THERE!

PLEASE !!!
NO ONE WANTS YOU TO GO!
Uu...
WHAT'S WRONG, MEGUMI?
WASH-, WASH-ROOM

CHAPTER 1 – END